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UNCLAS HARARE 001729

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/S
USDOC FOR AMANDA HILLIGAS
TREASURY FOR OREN WYCHE-SHAW
PASS USTR FLORIZELLE LISER
STATE PASS USAID FOR MARJORIE COPSON
STATE PASS USDOI/FWS FOR RICHARD RUGGIERO

¶E. O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAID](#) [BTIO](#) [EINV](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: TEMPORARY REPRIEVE FOR ZIMBABWE'S LARGEST CONSERVANCY

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Clive Stockil, director of Save Valley Conservancy (Zimbabwe's largest private wildlife reserve), told EconOff on October 8 that he has GOZ assurances of no action on the conservancy until after parliamentary elections and a subsequent cabinet reshuffle. End Summary

¶2. (SBU) About a month ago, Stockil organized a presentation for a group of investors that the GOZ wants to share in Save Valley ownership led by Masvingo Chief Fortune Charumbira to explain Save Valley's profitability, governance, and international linkages.

¶3. (SBU) Through his presentation, Stockil attempted to dispel the GOZ's impression that Save Valley is a cash cow. He disclosed financial records indicating losses in recent years. He sought to refute the GOZ's belief that anyone could run the conservancy by detailing the intricate governing structure and myriad of wildlife issues a conservancy manager must consider. Stockil sought to emphasize Save Valley's international importance by revealing the details of loans from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the high-level of international conservation interest in Save Valley. This, he hoped, impressed upon the GOZ that any adverse action against Save Valley would result in strong international condemnation.

4 (SBU) In a separate meeting afterwards, Environment Minister Frances Nhema assured Stockil that the GOZ will take no action on Save Valley until after the March 2005 parliamentary elections and a subsequent cabinet reshuffle. Stockil could then reassess his negotiating position once a new team was in place, Nhema said.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Stockil continues his negotiation dance to try to save the nature conservancy he co-owns with twenty-three others. As a result of Minister Nhema's assurances, Save Valley investors will continue to negotiate with the Masvingo investors, but agree to nothing for now. They hope a new cabinet will no longer support shared ownership with Charumbira's Masvingo investors. Save's owners have concluded that taking a more confrontational approach at this time would only encourage GOZ hardliners to pounce. End Comment.

Weisenfeld